

O ACEVO > PARADAVELLA

24,5 km
166,3 km to Santiago
by San Xoán do Padrón
167,5 km by A Proba de Burón

Dolmen de As Pedras Dereitas, A Fonsagrada



WHAT TO SEE



- The Primitive Way enters Galicia via the mountain pass of O Acevo (1,030 m). A beautiful snowy landscape in winter and lush vegetation in the warmer seasons. From here there is 167 km left to Santiago. Fonfria and its fresh water fountain send us on our way. There used to be a large pilgrims' hospital belonging to San Xoán de Portomarín, which was still open in the early twentieth century. We go through Barbeitos and Paradanova, where there are two alternatives on the route: one via A Fonsagrada – the municipal capital – and the other through A Proba de Burón.

On the former, we visit the "sacred fountain" located in the town of A Fonsagrada, and linked to Jacobean tradition by a miracle of the apostle St. James. From here we go through San Xoán do Padrón to Montouto, where the two routes join again.

The alternative to A Fonsagrada goes, as we said, through A Proba de Burón. The medieval tower is all that is left of the old fort of the Count of Altamira, the target of the attacks of the "irmandiños" – social revolts against the nobles – in the fourteenth century.

From Montouto the route continues to Paradavella.

The **spectacular landscapes** from the heights of O Acevo. In A Fonsagrada, the **Fons Sacrata**, the **Regional Museum** and local food like **butelo** (cold pork) and **Fonsagrada dessert** (a cake made with almonds and cream). San Xoán do Padrón, with its **eighteenth-century church**. In A Proba de Burón, the remains of the medieval hospital of **A Trindade** and the fort of the **Count of Altamira**, now a tower. The **Baroque** and **neoclassical altarpieces** in the **church of A Madalena**. The ruins of the **hospital of Montouto**. And the **"pallozas"** (old country houses) in Paradavella.



CASTROVERDE > LUGO

22 km
122,1 km to Santiago

Lugo wall and cathedral



WHAT TO SEE



- The route to the city of Lugo runs through captivating landscapes: fountains, brooks, crop fields, forests, stone walls and wooden fences, traditional houses ... Soutomeille, an abandoned village with a pre-Romanesque church. We are 20 km from Lugo and the place names with Jacobean references are a constant.

We then come into the oldest city in Galicia, the Roman *Lucus Augusti*, after passing under the bridge of A Chanca. We go up – Lugo is built on the site of a hill fort – until we come to the Roman wall (3rd and 4th centuries). The wall has been a world heritage site since

2000. We go in through the Gateway of San Pedro and then the city layout takes us first of all to the beautiful and welcoming Praza Maior, and then the cathedral of Santa María, where pilgrims stopped to pray before the Holy Sacrament, permanently exhibited in the church since the twelfth century.

Apart from the monuments – from Roman archaeology to significant Baroque buildings – that pilgrims can admire in Lugo, there is also an excellent natural area of native woods on the banks of the River Miño, and marvellous food.

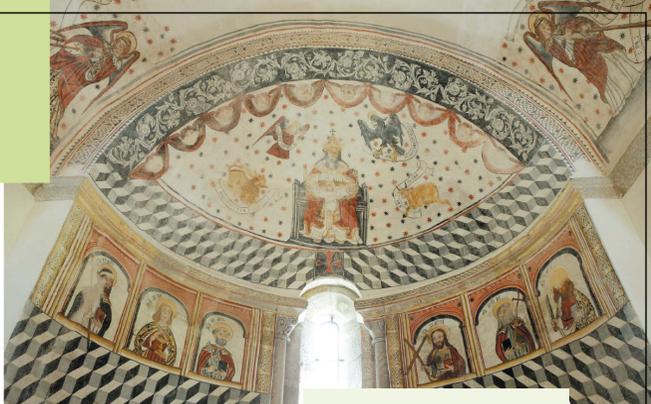
The **pre-Romanesque church of Soutomeille**. A **Chanca Bridge**, a spectacular engineering feat for the railway line (1880). The perimeter of the **Roman wall** is 2,140 m, there is also an upper walkway and ten gateways. It is the only complete standing Roman defensive construction in the world. The **cathedral** is Romanesque (North Door), Baroque (choir, chapel of Our Lady of the Large Eyes) and neoclassical (front). The **Provincial Museum** is in a Franciscan monastery. The **Interpretation Centre of the Way to Santiago** (Praza do Campo). And the **wines area**, famous for its tapas: we could highlight octopus with olive oil, especially in the October events (San Froilán), and pork derivatives.



SAN ROMAO DA RETORTA > MELIDE

28,2 km
81,3 km to Santiago

Santa María de Melde Church



WHAT TO SEE



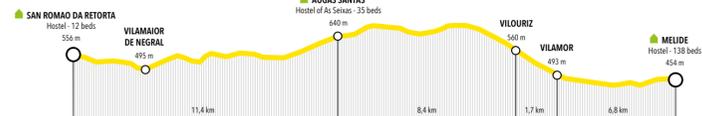
- In San Romao da Retorta we are delighted by the expressions of Romanesque, in both the church, at the foot of which lies a Roman milestone – a sign that the Primitive Way followed the old Roman road – and in the church (and stone crosses) of Santa Cruz da Retorta.

In A Ponte Ferreira, in the lands of Palas de Rei, apart from the medieval bridge, there is a Romanesque church dating from the twelfth century and which belonged to Vilar de Donas. Also in Palas de Rei is Augas Santas, whose name suggests healthy springs. There was a monastery here in the ninth century, San Salvador de Merián, with a church that preserves beautiful Romanesque remains.

On the border between the provinces of Lugo and A Coruña we cross over the Serra do Careón and come to the municipality of Toques, where we pass through Santiago de Vilouriz and Vilamor. In this municipality, although not on the route, lies Santo Antoiño de Toques, which once had a Benedictine monastery and conserves a magnificent pre-Romanesque church dating from the ninth century.

The Primitive Way joins the French Way in the historical Jacobean town of Melide. It then heads for the cathedral of Santiago, 53 kilometres away.

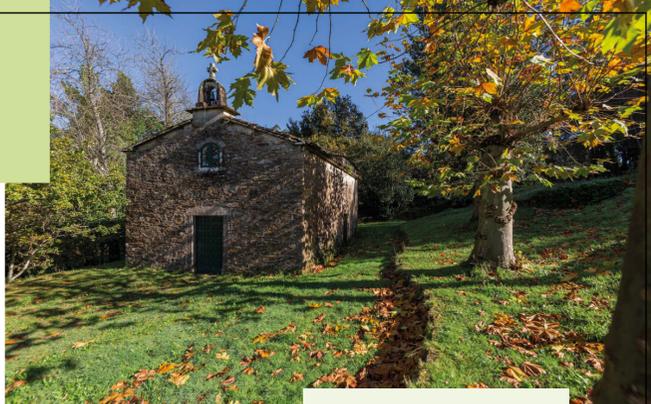
The **Romanesque church of San Romao da Retorta** (12th century, although there were later reformations). There is a **Roman milestone** at its side. The **Romanesque church of Santa Cruz da Retorta**, with an interesting Chi-Ro symbol on the tympanum of the north doorway. The main door has a relief of Christ blessing, between the sun and the moon. The **church of San Salvador de Merián**. **Serra do Careón**, on the border of the provinces of Lugo and A Coruña, close to Melide: a place with great ecological value. Its flora and fauna have almost disappeared from the rest of Galicia. The highest summit is O Careón, at 798 m. In Melide, the churches of San Pedro, Santa María and Sancti Spiritus.



ARZÚA > ARCA (O PINO)

18,5 km
38,7 km to Santiago

Santa Irene Hermitage, O Pino



WHAT TO SEE



- From Arzúa the last kilometres of the Route lie before us: 38.7 in total. We will divide them into two stages of 18.5 and 20.2 km respectively. Some people prefer to complete the remaining part of the route in a single day, staying the night at Monte do Gozo but it is more advisable to do it in two stages, stopping in Arca.

We leave the town of Arzúa by way of the Rúa do Carme. On this stage we alternate landscapes of forests and meadows (oaks, eucalyptus, fruit trees and crop fields) with sections on the paved surface of the Nacional 547 road. We should be very careful with vehicles, as we will have to cross the road several times.

We cross the River Vello and Brandeso and then pass through several hamlets: Preguntoño, A Peroxa, some names reflect the Jacobean cult, like A Calzada, A Calle, Ferreiros (again, with reference to the former industry, which among other functions, repaired hoes), A Salceda, Santa Irene – where there is a hostel for pilgrims – and A Rúa, which is at the gates of Arca, capital of the municipality of O Pino, the last town before Santiago. Throughout this stage we come across bars and taverns where we can always have a drink, and natural springs where we can have some refreshing water.

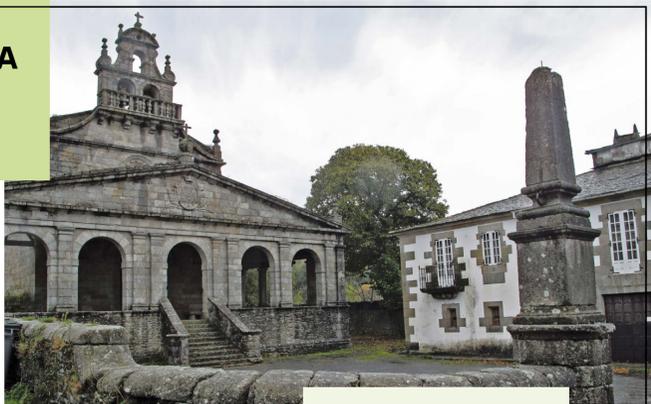
In the village of **Santa Irene**, there is a chapel devoted to the Portuguese martyr of the same name, built with the contribution of two nobles (18th century), and the "holy fountain" (17th century): according to tradition, its waters cure skin ailments. **O Pedrouzo** is the core of the parish of Arca (O Pino), a service area by the side of the N-547. It has a varied selection of bars and restaurants. Throughout the year cattle fairs, cuisine festivals, horse shows and concerts with popular bands and folk music are held here.



PARADAVELLA > CASTROVERDE

19,6 km
141,8 km to Santiago

Santa María de Vilabade Church, Castroverde



WHAT TO SEE



- From Paradavella we go down to O Cádavo. On the way, the villages of A Degolada and A Fontaneira. The stretches of verdant forest blend with others that are not so sheltered, next to the country road C-630.

We come to O Cádavo (710 m), capital of the municipality of Baleia and the second largest town after A Fonsagrada on the Primitive Way in Galicia. There is a tradition that in the nearby Campo da Matanza (Field of Slaughter) King Alfonso II fought an Islamic army. He was on his way to Compostela some time between 820 and 830, driven on by news of the discovery of the tomb.

We make our way to the top of A Vaqueriza (840 m). Before reaching Castroverde, we will pass through the

village of Vilalle. Nearby, we find Vilabade, the site of a former Franciscan convent, of which the temple, built in the middle of the 15th century, still stands in a beautiful square where the Pazo de Abraira-Arana is also located. Less than a kilometre away is the chapel of A Nosa Señora do Carme, in the middle of the leafy Carballeira oak groves.

Castroverde is the end of the stage (591 m) and capital of the municipality of the same name. The tower of the old castle stands proudly above the town, a reminder of the power of the houses of Lemos and Altamira.

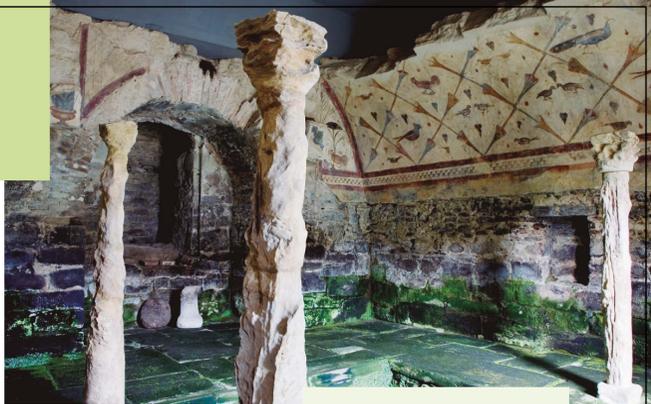
The **church of Santiago in A Fontaneira**. **Campo da Matanza**. The **church of Santa María de Vilabade**, declared a National Monument: a single nave Gothic church, dating from the mid-fifteenth century. The altarpiece dates from the eighteenth century and was made by artists from Compostela. An image of St. James stands over it. The portico is neoclassical and consists of five attractive arches. The **stately home of Abraira-Arana**, also known as the **Pazo de Vilabade**, used for country tourism. The **chapel of A Nosa Señora do Carme** and oak grove. The **church of Santiago** in Castroverde and **tower keep** (14th century) of the castle of the Counts of Lemos, later belonging to the Altamira.



LUGO > SAN ROMAO DA RETORTA

18,8 km
100,1 km to Santiago

Santalla de Bóveda de Mera Sanctuary, Lugo



WHAT TO SEE



- A short 18.8 km stretch. We will exit through the city walls, either via the Porta Miñá (or Porta do Carme) the oldest and most authentic archways in the city walls, or via the Porta de Santiago, in front of the neoclassical façade of the cathedral. We will continue down the path, following the track of a hidden Roman road, until we cross the River Miño, over a bridge that is also of Roman origin. We then arrive in the neighbourhood of A Ponte. Crossing the bridge, on the right, we continue walking along the river and the Club Fluvial sports facilities, as well as the San Lázaro chapel and neighbourhood.

Leaving the city behind us we reach San Vicente do Burgo, where there used to be a pilgrims' hospital.

There are interesting views of the city behind us on this stretch.

It is well worth taking a 3 km diversion from the route to visit the enigmatic temple of Santalla de Bóveda, a late Roman structure (4th century), declared a National Monument in 1931. The Roman road XIX ran in front of the temple, linking *Bracara Augusta* (Braga) and *Lucus Augusti* (Lugo) via *Iria Flavia* (Padrón).

Back on the Way we come to Bacurín, where the Romanesque church of San Miguel and the village of O Fontanes (also known as "Hospital") lie, until we reach San Romao da Retorta (in the municipality of Guntín), the end of this stage.

At the **Porta de Santiago**, at the foot of the city walls, is the **Temple of Mitra Museum** (a 3rd century archaeological site). 1km from Lugo, the **Roman baths** (1st and 2nd centuries AD), in the current Hotel Baleario, right by the River Miño. Two rooms still survive; one of them – the *Apodyterium* or changing room – is very complete. The baths are mentioned in the late fifteenth century in the popular pilgrims' guide by the German Hermann Künig von Vach. The **riverside landscapes** with their "caneiros" (little dams) and verdant nature. The **Baroque church of San Vicente do Burgo**. The temple of **Santalla de Bóveda**, a National Monument and paleo-Christian building, conserves one of the most interesting early medieval wall paintings in the whole peninsula. The **Romanesque church of San Miguel** (12th century), in Bacurín.



MELIDE > ARZÚA

14,3 km
53,1 km to Santiago

Ribadiso Hostel, Arzúa



WHAT TO SEE



- On leaving Melide we go through two towns with a great Jacobean tradition: Boente, where there is a parish church devoted to St. James, and A Castañeda, where Aymeric Picard, the author of the fifth book of the *Codex Callixtinus*, locates the lime furnaces used in the construction of the cathedral, which pilgrims supplied with limestone from Triacastela. This fact symbolised the general participation in the great constructive effort involved in the cathedral and also demonstrated the joining of forces and solidarity that the Way endows on each act of pilgrimage.

A bridge of medieval origin takes us across the River Iso. The first house on the right, next to the riverbed, used to be the hospital of Ribadiso, the last historical space that remained open for pilgrims on the French Way. It was restored in 1993 and reopened as a hostel for pilgrims. It is set in a natural environment of great beauty.

We now come to the town of Arzúa (388 m). Here is where pilgrims coming on the Northern Route join the French Way. About 10 km away from our route is Portodemouros reservoir, with a wide range of rural tourism and water sports.

In **Boente**, the **church of Santiago**. At the foot of the River Iso, the **recreational area of Ribadiso** with a **hostel** for pilgrims that in medieval times was a hospital. In Arzúa, the **church of Santiago**, the **Gothic chapel of A Madalena**, belonging to another hospital, now lost, and the **chapel of A Mota**, next to an oak grove of the same name. 5 km away from the route, the **stately home of Brandeso**, where Ramón María del Valle Inclán locates part of his novel *Autumn Sonata* (the inside is closed to visitors). And 10 km away **Portodemouros reservoir**. We are still in the **cheese-making region**, with the Designation of Origin Arzúa-Ulloa.



ARCA (O PINO) > SANTIAGO

20,2 km to Santiago

Praza do Obradoiro, Santiago de Compostela



WHAT TO SEE



- We leave the parish of Arca behind and walk through eucalyptus woods and villages such as Santo Antón and O Amenal, in an ascent that will take us to the core of A Lavacolla, in the vicinity of Santiago airport. Here is where pilgrims would wash their entire body in the brook that flows through the area. In fact, the etymology of "Lavacolla" is derived from *lava cola*, in an uninhibited reference to the hygiene of the genitals.

We now reach the Monte do Gozo (380 m), a small hill where pilgrims enjoyed a distant view of the cathedral for the first time. The first pilgrim in the group to reach the peak was declared "king of the pilgrimage". In 1993 a large hostel was built here.

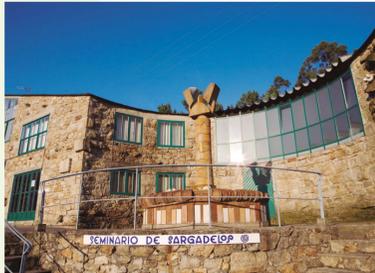
We still have a 5 km descent on the route. The Camino enters the city through the San Lázaro neighbourhood and leaves the Fontiñas neighbourhood on the left (nearby, there is a wide range of restaurants and amenities). Further along, we find ourselves on a street named calle de Os Concheiros, in the former guild district of artisans, who used to sell scallop shells, and in the historic and authentic San Pedro neighbourhood, where the route leads us towards the Porta do Camiño. It continues, on the final stretch, on pedestrian streets and squares like Casas Reais, Praza de Cervantes and A Aciocheira, from where we go into the cathedral – the alternative entrance, during Holy Years, is the Holy Door in A Quintana.

From the **Monte do Gozo** there is an excellent panoramic view of the city. The **Pavillón de Galicia**, in the neighbourhood of San Lázaro. The **Museum of the Galician People**. The **Pantheon of Illustrious Galicians**, next to the Museum, in the only Gothic church in the city. The **Galician Centre of Contemporary Art** (CGAC), designed by Portuguese architect Álvaro Siza. The **chapel of As Ánimas**, with its neoclassical altarpieces; the **Praza de Cervantes**, where the Town Hall stood until the end of the eighteenth century. The museum of the Casa da Troia, a famous student residence dating from the early twentieth century, and the monastery of **San Martiño Pinario**.



BEYOND THE CAMINO... THE PRIMITIVE WAY ->

You have reached Compostela. Now is the time to put away your walking boots and don the attire of a traveller: curious, sensitive, active. Retrace your steps. All that you were unable to see or enjoy along the way awaits you. Other equally enticing paths open up ahead. Have a look at these recommendations we have put together for you.



Lugo wall

Your journey along the earliest of all the pilgrimage routes to Santiago will have taken you to the two-millennia-old city of Lugo. Its Roman ruins, cuisine, monuments and surrounding woods all call for a more leisurely visit. Let us return to Roman Lugo (Lucus Augusti), which is sure to delight history and archaeology buffs. It boasts the only Roman Walls preserved intact - built between the 3rd and 4th centuries AD and listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site since the year 2000; Roman baths on the left bank of the Miño River, older than the walls themselves and once the largest in northwest Hispania; and the unique Temple of Mithra, located between Santiago Gate in the city walls and the neoclassical entrance to the cathedral. It is impossible not to be enticed by such spots.



Lugo Roman Baths

The Roman baths are inside the building which also houses the Balneario de Lugo (spa). They date from the 1st century. Today, two thousand years later, their sulphurous waters are still being used for therapeutic purposes.

From the spa, several kilometres of trails lead up and down the Miño River, allowing you to discover the true meaning of lucus, Latin for 'sacred grove', an appropriate name for this city surrounded by greenery and rivers. (In addition to the Miño, tributaries such as the Rato and Mera are also excellent for walking.) Hiking and mountain biking, always accompanied by a river, are among the great attractions of the Lugo area.

The city is now celebrated for the motto 'And when it comes to eating - Lugo!'. Its famous wine-drinking area, where each beverage is accompanied by a free tapa or small plate, invites visitors to explore the taverns, bars and restaurants, sampling the best of Galician cuisine. If you have to choose just two dishes, be sure to opt for pulpo á feira (octopus and potatoes dressed with olive oil and paprika) and lacón con grelos (pork shoulder with turnip greens).



Praza Maior de Lugo



A Ferzenza Forest, O Gorgo

A little less than fifteen kilometres from Lugo stands one of the most enigmatic monuments in the West: Santa Baia de Bóveda. Experts date the structure to the late Roman period (perhaps the 4th century). It may have been a large mausoleum associated with the martyr Priscillian. Architecture, sculpture and painting all engage in a dialogue within this esoteric temple located on the ancient Roman road known as Via XIX. The unique building has two floors, an interior pool and pictorial reliefs of human subjects and exotic birds. An enigma, as we said earlier.

The scenic beauty of eastern Galicia never fails to astonish. Another of the enticing landscapes near the Primitive Way is located some 15 kilometres from the city of Lugo. It is A Ferzenza Forest, situated on the upper reaches of the Miño River. Listed as a Biosphere Reserve, it is one of the most important freshwater swamp forests remaining on the Iberian Peninsula. In other words, the river periodically floods the ancient oak trees (over three centuries old) and monumental alders that make up the forest.



Fraga da Marronda, Baleira

Fraga da Marronda, a native woodland, is another space filled with unique natural elements. This exceptional forest is located in the uplands of the municipality of Baleira (Lugo) and is home to the westernmost beech trees in Europe.

In Becerreá, we find another extraordinary forest: Cruzul, which has an atypical landscape made up of holm oaks, the northernmost on the Iberian Peninsula. They grow at 600 metres above sea level along the banks of the Cruzul River. Nearby is Cruzul Bridge, dating from 1776, the work of engineer Carlos Lemaur. It is built entirely of domestic marble and has three semicircular arches 12 metres in diameter. This spectacular structure remains partially hidden.



Cruzul - Agüeira, Becerreá

To the south of the Primitive Way rise the mountains of Serra dos Ancares, one of the most iconic ranges in Galicia. Like O Cebreiro, the village of Piornedo is famous for its pallozas (pre-Roman dwellings). Surrounded by natural and scenic delights, this mountain range - part of a nature reserve - offers incredible hiking trails. One departs from A Degrada (Cervantes) and climbs up to Tres Bispos Peak (some 17 kilometres, 5 1/2 hours on foot). Options include viewing castles such as Doiras and Donis.



Cidade da Cultura, Santiago de Compostela

And now, secret Compostela: because there is another Santiago beyond the unique historic centre, featuring genuine cuisine and a lively cultural atmosphere. This new Santiago is closely linked to nature and leisure, centring on its poetic rivers, the Sar and Sarela, and the gentle mountains which protect them. The new walkways along the Sar River - to the east of the city in an area known as As Brañas do Sar - open up before you, near the trails running upwards through the new Bosque de Galicia Park. This newly created 24-hectare space occupies the slopes of Mount Gaia, presided over by the Cidade da Cultura. (City of Culture). To the west, on the other side of town, Mount Pedrosa offers what is perhaps the best panoramic view of the historic city. It can be reached by following an old Way of the Cross, which runs beside a large park known as A Gramxa do Xesto.

THE PRIMITIVE WAY ->

The Primitive Way is the first and oldest pilgrimage route. It joins Oviedo and Santiago de Compostela and for the most part follows old Roman roads. The first pilgrim king was precisely the Asturian/Galician monarch Alfonso II the Chaste, who in the first third of the ninth century visited Santiago to confirm that the remains that had recently come to light in Compostela were in fact those of the Apostle.

The king's devotion to the Jacobean cause - he was brought up in the monastery of Samos in Lugo and was a follower of Beatus of Liebano - was decisive in the establishment of the new cult. Alfonso II had the first church built in the nascent city. Furthermore, he granted various donations and promoted the setting up of the first monastic community destined to take care of the demands of the cult in Santiago, the monastery of San Paio de Antealares.

The Primitive Way was often used by people from Asturias and Galicia in the ninth century and most of the tenth and also attracted pilgrims from other parts of the north of Spain and Europe. The next king, Alfonso III, came twice to Santiago and consecrated the second church in 899.



When Leon became the new capital of the kingdom, the monarchs favoured the French Way as the privileged route (11th and 12th centuries).

Even so, the Primitive Way remained as an alternative for devout pilgrims coming from the great collection of relics in the cathedral of San Salvador in Oviedo and the cathedral of Lugo, which holds the papal privilege of showing the Holy Sacrament day and night. Furthermore, the remains of numerous pilgrims' hospitals are witness to its importance: some in the high mountains and others in the city of Lugo itself.

The Way goes through beautiful landscapes. Entry into Galicia is via the mountain pass of O Acevo (1,030 metres) and the shire of A Fonsagrada (from the Latin fons sacrata, sacred fountain), one of the most authentic landscapes in the mountains of Galicia. We pass by the historical Hospital of Montouto and the Castle of Castrovêde, coming to the oldest city in Galicia, Lucus Augusti. Lugo conserves the only complete Roman wall in the Empire, and is a world heritage site. The Primitive Way comes into the city through the Gateway of San Pedro; and continues on the way to Compostela through the Porta Miñá. In Melide, the route joins the French Way and arrive to Compostela after having walked 166,39 km.

THE GALICIA WAYS ->



- CAMINOS OFFICIALLY MARKED OUT: Signposting executed. The French Way, The Primitive Way, The Northern Way, The English Way. CAMINOS RECOGNISED: Pending Official Marking Out. The Silver Way or "Camino Mozarabe", The Portuguese Way, The Portuguese Way of the coast, The Winter Way, The Route of the Sea of Arousa and River Ulla, The Fisterra and Muxia Way.

MAP OF SANTIAGO DE COMPOSTELA PLACES ASSOCIATED WITH THE WAY OF ST. JAMES ->

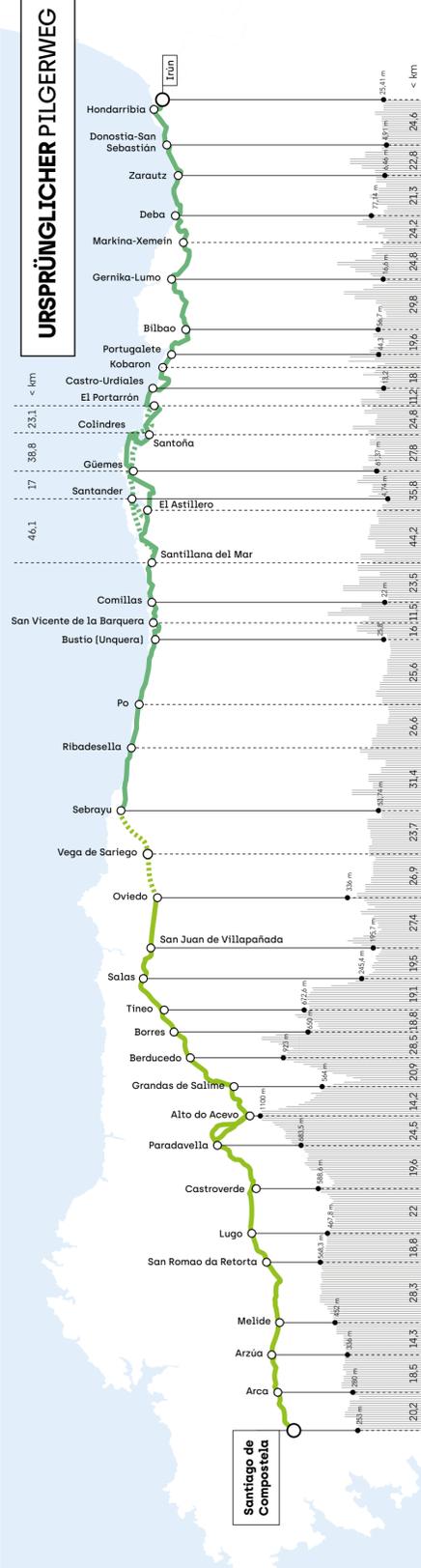
Map of Santiago de Compostela with 21 numbered locations and a list of associated places. Includes a legend for the Pilgrim's Office and information on the International Pilgrim Welcome Centre.

HELPFUL TIPS FOR PILGRIMS

- CRENDENTIAL OF THE PILGRIM: This is the document in which you collect stamps from the places you pass through and that will allow you to obtain the "Compostela". HEALTHCARE CARD: Spanish pilgrims should always carry their health insurance card. PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES: In addition to the general recommendations which all pilgrims should observe, disabled pilgrims should: - Before leaving, learn about the difficulties they may encounter and the accessibility of the different services found along the Way of St. James (hostels, catering facilities, etc.). IF TRAVELLING WITH ANIMALS: - Make sure that animals are vaccinated and have been de-wormed and that their obligatory health cards are up-to-date. - Plan and adapt the route and the stages to include accessible accommodation.

Before starting the pilgrimage

- Prepare physically for the journey, and bear in mind that stages should be planned depending on individual physical ability, the difficulty involved, and plan more frequent or longer breaks to suit individual needs. - Once pilgrims start their journey, they should not try to walk too quickly and keep a regular pace, at least over the first few days. - Foot care is essential for preventing blisters; pilgrims should wear comfortable and broken-in shoes (two pairs are advisable), with thick, light rubber outer soles. Socks should be breathable, linen or cotton, and should be dry and worn properly to prevent scratches. - Spanish pilgrims should always carry their health insurance card. - If travelling from a non-EU member state, there may be an agreement in effect with Spain, therefore pilgrims are advised to obtain this information before their pilgrimage and travel with the corresponding documentation. PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES: In addition to the general recommendations which all pilgrims should observe, disabled pilgrims should: - Before leaving, learn about the difficulties they may encounter and the accessibility of the different services found along the Way of St. James (hostels, catering facilities, etc.). - Exercise caution when crossing roads if they have a hearing impairment, and in the case of pilgrims with visual impairments, always be accompanied when walking, due to crossings, detours and difficulties in the terrain. IF TRAVELLING WITH ANIMALS: - Make sure that animals are vaccinated and have been de-wormed and that their obligatory health cards are up-to-date. - Plan and adapt the route and the stages to include accessible accommodation.



THE PRIMITIVE WAY

